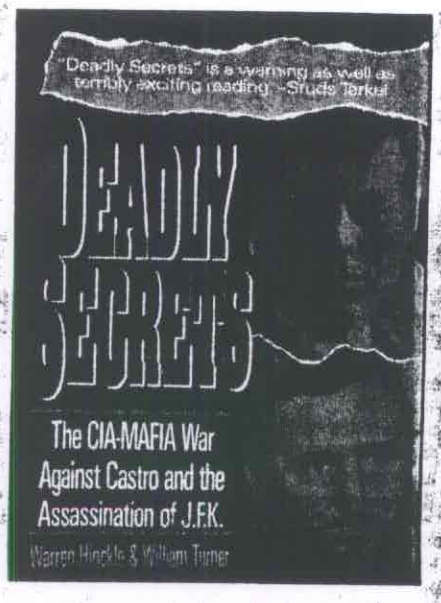
GEORGE BUSH'S DEADLY SECRETS

The First CIA President Lived Up To His Pedigree


"Deadly Secrets" is a warning as well as terribly exciting reading. –Studs Terkel
DEADLY SECRETS
The CIA-MAFIA War Against Castro and the Assassination of J.F.K.
Warren Hinckle & William Turner

President Bush's father, the late Prescott Bush, Sr., a Republican senator from Connecticut, was a great golfer and a Whiffenpoofer who sang a mean harmony. His cause was Skull and Bones, the secret Yale society with roots somewhere back in the trenches of seventeenth century Bavaria. When Bush Sr. and another Skull and Bones joker stole Geronimo's skull from his grave in Fort Sill, Oklahoma, they took it to the windowless Skull and Bones building on the Yale

BY WARREN HINCKLE AND WILLIAM TURNER

symbol of corporate virtue, IIT, to destabilize and overthrow the democratically elected government of Chile. These "arrangements" resulted in the murder of Chilean President Salvador Allende in 1973 and the installation of a dictatorship. Bush protected Helms to the hilt, helping to keep him a free man. But in 1977 Helms pleaded no contest to two criminal counts of failing to testify "fully, completely and accurately" before Congress.

DCI Bush saved some seventy current and former CIA agents from the dock. He performed the rescue by simply refusing to turn the requisite CIA records over to the Justice Department, which was seeking to prosecute the spies. In the course of his defense Bush did not raise the issue of the national interest (as past CIA directors had in similar circumstances) or the Nixonian concept of national security. Instead he took the admirably stubborn position that because the CIA had told its operatives to do what they had done, it could not be a crime.

According to an October 14, 1976 memorandum by Robert Keuch of the criminal division of the Justice Department, at a meeting on October 2, 1976, then Attorney General Edward Levi had strongly recommended that neither Mr. Bush nor any other CIA official contact Mr. Helms" about the grand jury investigation. Yet on October 13, Bush wrote both Helms and former CIA Director John McCone telling them a federal grand jury might call them as witnesses, and offering his apologies and CIA assistance in preparing their testimonies. Bush continued in his reluctance to provide documents throughout the fall even after McCone, in a "Dear George" letter dated November 18, warned Bush flat out that he was greatly troubled that a CIA official had perjured himself in testimony before Congress. Also that fall then White House counsel Phillip Buchen wrote a thundering letter to President Ford that was somewhat prophetic in view of the national security controversies of the 1980s. Buchen said that Bush's having his way would:

"abort the pending investigation and lead to no prosecution, with the consequence that otherwise prosecutable persons will be saved from prosecution merely to protect their identities and CIA connections from disclosure . . . Such an outcome would be interpreted by knowledgeable people as setting a precedent for never investigating or prosecuting a confidential source of information, even though he may have committed perjury; also for not prosecuting anyone for any crime if the evidence to do so would involve disclosing confidential CIA sources or methods."

Ford tried ordering Bush to cooperate with the prosecutors, but Bush remained stubborn and the CIA men in question were never brought to the bar. More than a few among the grateful spies became volunteers on Bush's 1980 presidential campaign and stayed aboard for the Reagan-Bush effort. This gaggle of former CIA agents practiced their trade craft to destabilize President Jimmy Carter's re-election in what became known as the "dirty tricks" campaign. They not only stole Carter's briefing book before his television debate with Reagan, they also set up Carter's brother Billy to look like a cheerleader for Libya, planted moles in the National Security Council, and even used the White House situation room to spy on Carter's every move and waking thought.

Also at this time, Vice President George Bush was also in charge of the much-ballyhooed "War on Drugs." It's significant to note that Bush is the only figure in public life who has been a key player in the drug wars of three administrations.

In 1971 Bush was first brought into the anti-drug war by Richard Nixon, who appointed him to the White House Cabinet Committee on International Narcotic Control. This "war" proved useful for Nixon as a cover for the White House plumbers and the other hijinks that ended in Watergate. It was also useful for the CIA, who tucked its agents under deep

campus, and hid it like a dog would a bone. He lied and said he hadn't taken it. The Apaches were darn mad. Decades later, when they came to Yale to try to get their main man's skull back, a representative of the Apaches claimed that the Bonesmen tried to palm someone else's skull off on them.

George Bush joined Skull and Bones in 1948. There, as his father before him, he partook of the secret initiation rites such as telling his sexual history to the group. Young George matured in a moral atmosphere where lying is an art form—and he has had lots of practice since. As Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, where prevarication is a competitive lifestyle, he stonewalled the Justice Department to protect the CIA's dirty secrets—its illegal domestic operations, the agency's strategic alliances with drug lords and narco-terrorists, and the murderous dealings of the agents it had recruited to assassinate Fidel Castro of Cuba. As Vice President of the United States under the somnolent Reagan, Bush helped arm the Contras at a time when doing so was against the law—and he lied like a rug about it. By the time he became President in his own right in 1989, George "Read my lips" Bush was without compare the most accomplished liar in American politics. Like father, like son.

Bush's Skull-and-Bones networking and his family's intelligence connections have materially shaped his life. Young George was husbanded into the oil business by Henry Neil Mallon, an old family friend and Skull and Bonesman who had done his part for the commonwealth by helping Allen Dulles recruit people into the CIA. Whether Mallon actually recruited Bush *fils* into the CIA remains unknown, although Bush has obliquely hinted at his connections with the agency. In his 1988 campaign autobiography, *Looking Forward*, Bush wrote that when President Gerald Ford appointed him CIA director in 1976, "I'd come to the CIA with some general knowledge of how it operated."

George Bush made his first real money through offshore oil drilling in the Caribbean in the late 1950's and Castro's revolution could hardly have been construed as anything but bad news for the freebooting oil fraternity—as it was for the CIA. At the time of the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961, Bush had rigs positioned thirty miles north of Cuba near Cay Sal, coincidentally an island the CIA used as a service station for covert operations.

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If the young George Bush was not a CIA "asset," he was certainly user-friendly to the agency. Two of his tapmates in the Skull and Bones went on to become top CIA operatives in the 1950's. Another fraternity-mate, William F. Buckley, Jr., was assigned to the CIA station in Mexico City in the 1960s, when E. Howard Hunt was in charge. George Bush's 1980 grab for the presidential gold ring was supported by a virtual army of spies. Retired CIA agents came out of the shadows to do precinct work. The *Washington Post* reported that "no presidential campaign in recent memory—perhaps ever—has attracted as much support from the intelligence community as the campaign of former CIA director George Bush." When Bush had to console himself with the second spot on the ticket—his selection as Veep was engineered by his father's friend, Reagan's all-knowing campaign manager, William Casey—Bush's spook supporters moved en masse into the Reagan-Bush campaign.

The intelligence community had reason to go all the way for George. As DCI-CIA—shorthand for Director of Central Intelligence—he had burned bridges to keep President Gerald Ford's barking dogs away from the DCI Richard Helms, who was being pursued in an unholy manner by the Justice Department for lying to Congress. Helms had been running what LBJ had called "a damned Murder Inc. in the Caribbean" and of course Helms lied about that—along with the lying about the plot to kidnap General Schneider of Chile (which resulted in his death) and the other dirty little arrangements involving the CIA, Henry Kissinger, and officials of that

cover in the Drug Enforcement Agency and thus tasted the forbidden fruit of domestic operations while also providing an additional measure of protection for CIA-favored drug traffickers who enjoyed a certain immunity as long as they did the agency's bidding.

In the mid-seventies Congress and the Justice Department had begun a crackdown on the CIA covert operatives, or "cowboys," as they were endearingly called. (This was the investigation that Bush, as President Ford's CIA director had tried to block.) But in 1977 Jimmy Carter's CIA director, Admiral Stansfield Turner, purged the cowboys in the worst bloodletting in agency history—more than 800 covert ops were fired, and even General Noriega of Panama was taken off the payroll. It was after Turner's Great Terror that angry CIA Cowboys went in droves to the 1980 Bush-for-President campaign, and then to the Reagan-Bush team.

Thus began the second phase of George Bush's war on drugs. Once in office, President Reagan began his holy war against the Sandinistas. He put Vice President Bush in charge of the War on Drugs *and* the War on Terrorism, and the cowboys enjoyed a magnificent restoration. Under Bush's dual commands the CIA's airlines began to fly again; the Miami station, once the biggest spy post in the world during the anti-Castro plots of the sixties, was retrofitted; Noriega was put back on the payroll; and in the name of helping the Contras the inevitable exceptions to the crackdown on drug traffickers were made. The war on drugs provided a useful cover for the pursuit of foreign policy goals.

In 1976 CIA Director George Bush had received two reports—one from the DEA, the other from the General Accounting Office— evaluating the CIA's sadsack role in the drug wars. Both concluded that drug enforcement and intelligence were two different worlds, and never the twain should meet; it was folly to throw the CIA, whose covert operations required maintaining unsavory alliances, into the prosecution-oriented drug wars.

However, as Reagan's first anti-drug czar, Bush did just that. In 1983 he announced a major new effort keyed to increased "CIA help in the crackdown" against drugs. The results were, once again, a calamity. DEA officials later testified before Congress that all the CIA did was sandbag them. Kept in the dark, the DEA was sending "attaboy" letters congratulating General Noriega on his anti-drug efforts while the CIA knew that the Medellin cocaine cartel was using Panama as a parking lot. The Senate subcommittee on narcotics (chaired by Democrat John Kerry of Massachusetts) was told that the CIA protected drug smuggling by Contra resuppliers operating on the rebels' southern front in Costa Rica. And the CIA's close relations with the now-defunct Mexican Directorate of Federal Security (a corrupt version of the FBI) obstructed the DEA's investigation into the 1985 torture-murder in Mexico of one of its agents, Kiki Camarena. These unsavory relationships were nurtured during Bush's long reign as anti-drug enforcer.

George Bush had other Mexican secrets to hide. One was the relationship that existed between himself and Jorge Diaz Serrano, who was convicted of looting Mexico's national oil monopoly, Pemex, which was used in the 1960s and 1970s as deep cover for CIA "off the books" operations.

After learning the oil business, Bush formed his own oil company, Zapata Petroleum Corporation, in 1953. He raised eyebrows throughout the Texas oil industry when he established an unusual relationship with Mexican oil man Serrano. In 1960 Bush and Diaz Serrano entered into a joint venture in a Mexican drilling company called Permargo. (Bush's 50 percent interest in the corporation was hidden because his ownership violated Mexican law. Permago got government favors as a Mexican-owned company; only 100 percent Mexican-owned companies receive special consideration.) Permargo had lucrative contracts with Pemex and in 1975 Diaz Serrano became head of Pemex, a post he held for five years. It was during the reign of Bush's ex-partner that the CIA began using Pemex as an operational cover, according to agency sources. (Bush was CIA director in 1976.) Reports later surfaced of Pemex's being bilked of millions during Serrano's tenure and in 1983 he was convicted of defrauding the Mexican government. Bush's former partner spent five years in prison.

When *Barron's* financial magazine looked into Bush's shadowy Mexican

operation, investigative reporter Jonathan Kwitny found that the key Zapata records detailing Bush's business relationship with Diaz Serrano, from 1960-66 were gone. They had been "inadvertently destroyed" a few months after Bush was sworn in as Vice President, the SEC admitted.

George Bush ran a mini-CIA in the vice president's office. In 1981 Bush's staff included Admiral Dan Murphy, who had served as his deputy CIA director; ex-CIA man Donald Gregg, who as the Vice President's national security adviser kept contact with the organizers of the illegal Contra resupply operations; and Jennifer Fitzgerald, Bush's secretary at the CIA and longtime aide.

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Bush had occasion to recruit other ex-CIA employees when he provided a safe harbor for Marine Lt. Col. Oliver North's domestic dirty tricks. In *Looking Forward*, George Bush gave the distinct impression that he hardly knew North, but that was another lie. In his public pronouncements on the Iran-Contra affair he also insisted that he was "out of the loop" on North's ill-fated arms-for-hostages dealing with Iran and the *baksheesh* of guns for the Contras.

Bush's bad-relative treatment of North was somewhat ungenerous, since in his testimony before the Iran-Contra committee, North hailed Bush's bravery in reading the riot act to the death squads when he and Bush visited El Salvador together in 1983.

The marine came close to tears in reciting how the Veep was one of the few people in the Reagan administration to console him when his father died. Despite these public suggestions of intimacy, the committee remained incurious about the Bush-North relationship. It passed up fertile ground.

The Bush-North cup ran over in 1990 with the release of 2,600 uncensored pages of North's White House diaries. The unmistakable picture to be drawn from these copious entries is that Ollie North and Bush were as close as the stamp to the envelope. For example, North was keenly interested in the Vice President's travel schedule. Whenever Bush went abroad, North made a note of it, and then devised a plan for hitting up the head of the visited country for aid to the Contras. Whether Bush actually made such solicitations himself is not indicated in North's hen-scratchy short-hand, but specific diary entries, even the early and partially deleted ones, released from the redacted version by the Iran-Contra committee which omitted entire pages, show Bush performing a variety of delicate tasks for North.

In September 1985, shortly after the first Israeli-arranged shipment of U.S. TOW missiles to Iran, Israeli spy Amiram Nir emerged as North's contact man and Bush met with Nir in Israel. Nir, who died in a mysterious plane crash in Mexico in 1988, was a key player in the shipment of arms to Iran and the "diversion" of profits from the overpriced arms to the Contras. (The September meeting may have been the embryo of the diversion scheme.) At North's request, Bush met with Nir a second time on July 29, 1986, in Jerusalem, where Bush's aide Craig Fuller took detailed notes on the briefing Nir gave on the arms-for-hostages progress, or lack thereof. Yet Bush has repeatedly said he knew nothing of the arms schemes until December 1986.

Students of the Iran-Contra affair who have compared the uncensored North diaries with the edited version used by the committee note that many of the deletions were of North's references to Bush.

North's diaries also reveal that the committee was less than independent. On March 4, 1985, then National Security Adviser Robert McFarlane met with four Republican representatives, a meeting at which the idea of seeking contributions from third countries, such as Saudi Arabia, to get around a congressional ban on aiding the Contras was discussed. (This was when North was coordinating his

operations out of V.P. Bush's Anti-Terrorism Task Force.) Two of the congressmen present, Representatives Henry Hyde of Illinois and Bill McCollum of Florida, went on to become North's staunchest defenders on the Iran-Contra committee.

According to the report issued by Kerry's Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Terrorism, Narcotics, and International Operations (called *Drugs Law Enforcement and Foreign Policy)* there was "obvious and widespread" drug trafficking by Contra suppliers going on in the war zones of northern Costa Rica—when George Bush was heading the War Against Drugs. The Kerry subcommittee found that these drugs-for-guns activities were being covered up by CIA operatives and other players in the resupply network.

And there are indications a plenty of Contra drug dealing in North's diaries. For instance, there is this entry on July 12, 1985: "$14 Million to finance came from drugs." But North was able to contain reports of Contra drug money because Bush's Task Force on Combating Terrorism gave North the mandate and the equipment to pursue a wide range of domestic intelligence operations against opponents of the administration's Central America policy. Bush's staff brought CIA experts in propaganda, and disinformation into his anti-terrorism loop, using them to confuse the American people about the situation in Central America—the line was put out by North from an office Bush provided for him, that the Sandinistas were dealing drugs—and to bypass both Congress and the Constitution in the Contra resupply effort. North also coordinated fund-raising efforts to defeat anti-Contra congressmen up for re-election, and even sicced the FBI on disaffected Contra suppliers, such as Jack Terrell, who was attempting to tell about Contra drug trafficking.

In January 1986 Bush's Task Force recommended that a secret Office to Combat Terrorism be created for North and that its existence be kept from those members of the National Security Council who did not have a need to know. Two key Bush Task Force staff members, Robert Earl and Craig Coy, then moved into North's new office where they worked on matters related to the care, feeding, and arming of the Contra forces. Under the aegis of the Alien Border Control Committee, an offshoot of the Bush Task Force's counter-terrorism program, the FBI cooperated in the surveillance of opponents of the administration's policies in Central America. Although this was not a CIA operation, its existence brings to mind the words of the framers of the CIA's 1947 enabling legislation, who had cautioned against ever using the CIA's awesome powers within the country. The covert services were forbidden by charter and congressional mandate from operating domestically. In the 1980s their black arts were practiced under the vice presidential seal. Aside from his role as chief combater of terrorism, Bush's other area of command was to stop the flow of drugs into the country. As head of the Florida Task Force to combat drugs and the National Narcotics Border Interdiction System, Bush made Admiral Murphy his sidekick and once again assigned CIA agents to the war on drugs. Although Bush has stubbornly maintained

that his anti-drug efforts have been successful, during his years minding the nation's drug store the metric tonnage of cocaine coming into the United States *tripled*, its price fell more than 50 percent from what it was in 1982, and the crack wars exploded in the inner cities of America. Once again, a significant factor in the failure of the war on drugs was the CIA's long-standing policy—at which George Bush excels—of ignoring the drug-dealing of perceived friends.

If there is one CIA operative who symbolizes the sum of George Bush's deadly secrets it is Luis Posada Carriles, a terrorist with nine lives. Posada was last in the news in February of 1990, when he drove a black Suzuki jeep into an Esso gas station in Guatemala City . He couldn't talk because he had been shot in the jaw and the chest, and he gestured impatiently for a pencil and paper. "Please help me," he scribbled. "I am an adviser to Cerezo." He wrote down a phone number, made the sign of the cross, and then collapsed against the steering wheel. That blood-stained note indicated that the man had friends in high places (Vinicio Cerezo is the Guatemalan president), and that he had some familiarity with being wounded. "Allergic to penicillin," he had troubled to write in his last moment of consciousness. When the service station owner called the number, a woman answered the telephone; she seemed to know what to do. Fifteen minutes later, according to the *Miami Herald*, two ranking members of President Cerezo's government—Rolando Castro, the director of Guatemala customs, and Francisco Ramirez, chief of the Guatemala telephone company—were at the Esso station with an ambulance. A Cuban trained in demolition and assassination by the CIA, Posada's assignment for Cerezo had been to set up a super-secret security and surveillance squad, capable of snooping on Guatemala's corrupt military. The injured Posada was taken discreetly to El Pilar sanatorium, a pricey private facility in Guatemala City, and presidential guards and members of the National Police were stationed day and night outside the sickroom door. But a month later the still recovering Posada slipped silently away from the sanatorium.

Posada is another instructional figure from George Bush's past. With his long ties to the CIA, he figures in incidents from Bush's career as DCI and as Ronald

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Reagan's first drug czar. According to intelligence sources, the CORU (the Commando of United Revolutionary Organizations) was formed in 1976, partly at the CIA's instigation, as an umbrella organization for Cuban exile terrorism. Posada received his CIA training at Fort Benning, Georgia. He came to the CORU by way of Operation 40, a clandestine CIA affiliate formed to enter Cuba after the Bay of Pigs invasion and eliminate liberals and Castro sympathizers. When the invasion failed, Operation 40 was kept intact by the CIA both to spy on the Cuban exile movement itself and to launch raids against Cuba from the U.S. mainland. But Operation 40 members soon became involved in drug smuggling. The unit was hastily shut down by the CIA in 1970 when an Operation 40 plane carrying a cargo of heroin and cocaine crashed in Southern California.

After his Operation 40 stint, from 1967 to 1976 Posada was a CIA double agent inside the DISIP, the Venezuelan secret police. While on that assignment in 1971 he arranged cover for the gunmen attempting to assassinate Fidel Castro during his state visit to President Allende of Chile. Three years later Allende was overthrown and killed during a CIA-backed coup. Posada's career was put on ice for eight years when he was arrested and jailed in Venezuela for the 1976 bombing of Cubana Airlines Flight 455 which killed seventy-three people.

On August 16, 1985, Posada escaped from his Venezuelan prison cell and became involved in the 1985-86 Contra resupply operation at Ilopango Air Base in El Salvador, which thirty-year CIA spook Donald Gregg, Bush's national security adviser (now U.S. ambassador to South Korea), was helping to coordinate. The Ilopango base has been cited in congressional hearings as a nexus for a guns-for-drugs operation in which planes would arrive in El Salvador with guns for the Contras and return to the U. S. with cocaine. Although the Iran-Contra select committee shied away from investigating allegations about

Contra drug trafficking, it did reveal that Amalgamated Commercial Enterprises (ACE), a Panamanian front organization, paid part of the salaries of the Contra resupply ground crews. ACE was the funding vehicle for the purchase of the C123K Contra resupply cargo plane which was shot down over Nicaragua on October 5,1986. Eugene Hasenfus survived the crash and talked, leading to the unraveling of the Iran-Contra affair. After Posada's escape from jail, he began working at Ilopango with his old friend, the CIA agent and fellow Bay of Pigs veteran, Felix Rodriguez, who had gone to El Salvador with the blessing of Donald

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Gregg. Since Rodriguez and Posada were on the scene, the Vice President's office received the first word of the crash of the C123K cargo plane. (Hasenfus later described both Posada and Rodriguez as "U.S. agents," and said they had bragged of being friends of George Bush.) Posada disappeared from El Salvador shortly after the Hasenfus crash. This saved Bush from being asked embarrassing questions about how an escaped terrorist came to be working hand in glove with the Vice President's point man in El Salvador in an illegal Contra resupply operation.

Deadly Secrets, which chronicles the United States government's obsession with destroying Fidel Castro, and the disastrous consequences for America as the Secret War against Cuba turned inward, was first published in 1981 under the title *The Fish Is Red*. Since then the political parameters of the world-as-we-knew-it have changed fundamentally; now that the Cold War is over, but one element of its anticommunist zealotry remains hot: the continued attempts by U.S. policy makers to overthrow the government of Cuba and replace it with one of their design. Of all the Cold War policy makers, President George Bush is the one most intimately connected with keeping the secrets of the failed attempts to achieve that goal, and forwarding its deadly agenda. By the fall of 1987 the bellicose Ronald Reagan had softened and had even reached an immigration agreement with the Cuban government. But once Bush assumed full control of the White House he quickly decried as "willful speculation" the idea that any element of sanity would enter relations between the two countries. Bush then proceeded to underscore his point by initiating a series of hostile actions against Cuba, which included freeing *el primo* anti-Castro terrorist Orlando Bosch; launching F-4, F-5, and F-16 fighter planes and B-52 bombers from Florida in aggressive military maneuvers near the Cuba coastline; restricting Cuban immigration despite the 1987 agreement; tightening the economic embargo that by the Cuban government's estimate has cost it more than $15 billion since 1961 and made life increasingly difficult for Cuban citizens; creating the propaganda-intensive TV Marti, to follow Radio Marti; and outrageously harassing the Cuban embassy in Panama City during the December 1989 U.S. invasion of Panama.

Bush hardened Washington's policy toward Cuba despite the fact—as Wayne Smith, former head of the U.S. Interests Section in Havana (and a critic of U.S. foreign policy) has pointed out—that the conditions of successive Washington administrations for "normalizing" relations with Cuba had already been substantially fulfilled: Cuban troops had left Angola, political prisoners in Cuba

had been released in large numbers, and Soviet-Cuban ties had been reduced in a major way. "Cuba has the same effect on American administrations that the full moon used to have on werewolves: they just lose their rationality at the mention of Castro or Cuba," Smith said.

The preservation of the Secret War against Cuba was a George Bush crusade. And as that war entered its third decade, Bush sent his own son into the dark corridors of the anti-Castro movement first formed by the alliance between the intelligence agencies and organized crime. The experience has both enriched and degraded Jeb Bush. Like father, like son.

In the mid-1980s the bilingual Jeb Bush became the Republican Party's unofficial ambassador to Miami's Cuban-American community; he also served as a cheerleader for Miguel Recarey, Jr., a rich anti-Castro Cuban with connections, both peripheral and mainline, to organized crime, and the Contras. An exile to Miami from a wealthy, politically connected Havana family (his uncle had been Batista's minister of health), Recarey artfully traded on his anti-Castro credentials to build a health maintenance organization, International Medical Centers (IMC), to become the medical-care czar of Dade County. Recarey maintained both a Dom Perignon lifestyle and a paranoid existence. (He especially feared assassination by poison. The bedroom on his estate outside Miami had bulletproof windows and steel doors, and he was guarded night and day by Uzi-carrying security men who drove cars equipped with mobile telephones with voice scramblers.) Recarey had openly boasted of his close connections with Florida mob boss Santos Trafficante who was an early recruit to the CIA's assassination attempts against Fidel Castro. Trafficante provided short-term financing to IMC which under the beneficial gaze of the Reagan-Bush administration became the largest health maintenance organization in the nation.

Recarey, a certified public accountant, got a jump start in the HMO business by signing up 10,000 Cuban political prisoners and their families as they stepped off the plane in Miami after Castro released them from jail. A bigtime contributor to both the Democratic and Republican parties, Recarey paid enormous fees to former Reagan-Bush campaign officials to represent him in Washington—$400,000 to Lyn Nofziger, $400,000 to the p.r. firm of Black, Manfort and Stone, $300,000 to former Reagan campaign manager John Sears. But despite this high-powered help, Recarey asked the Vice President's son to make a key phone call to the Department of Health and Human Services when he needed a waiver of Medicare rules to expand his health empire, which was largely dependent on money from the government program for the elderly. After Jeb Bush called a federal regulator in 1985 and (according to later testimony in Congress) said that "America could trust Mike Recarey," the HHS suspended the regulation that no more than 50 percent of an HMO's income could come from Medicare payments. The *Miami Herald* reported that at the time he intervened on Recarey's behalf, Jeb Bush's Florida real estate firm stood to make $250,000 in a deal Bush was negotiating for IMC. Even though the deal did not go through, Recarey in 1986 paid Bush Realty $75,000 for work on the failed project. Even though CPA Recarey had been jailed briefly for failing to file income tax returns, and had a history of fraud allegations in prior business relationships with Florida hospitals, HHS did relax the rules for him, and IMC's income from Medicare checks grew to more than 80 percent of its receipts. When it collapsed in a billion dollar Medicare fraud in 1987, it was the largest recipient of Medicare benefits in the nation. Thousands of elderly Floridians never received the medical care for which IMC received their Medicare checks. IMC was a classic "bust-out" operation where bills weren't paid, services weren't provided, and

millions from its Medicare income of $30 million a month were siphoned off to Miguel Recarey's other "business ventures." IMC was tied into a private network that supported the Contras, and federal investigators suspected that some of the hundreds of millions in Medicare funds that disappeared through the "black hole" of Recarey's accounting went to the Nicaraguan rebels.

Miguel Recarey's mysterious friends in high places served him to the last. Although under indictment for massive fraud and racketeering in the IMC collapse, Recarey was allowed to keep his passport, get passports for his children, sell off assets—including condos, Ferraris, and BMWs—and he received an "expedited" $2.2 million tax refund from the IRS, all before fleeing the country, presumably for Venezuela, in 1988.

In 1989, Jeb Bush moved on to become campaign manager for Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, the first Cuban American elected to Congress. She ran on a platform demanding secular sainthood for the baby doctor-turned bomber, Orlando Bosch, America's most prolific terrorist, since the 1960s, Bosch had been responsible for dozens of bombings in the United States and abroad.

Unfortunately, during the campaign, the object of Ms. Ros-Lehtinen's affections was lodged in a federal clink in Miami, pending deportation for entering the country illegally. (Bosch had fled to Latin America in 1974, violating parole from a 1967 conviction for firing a bazooka at a Polish freighter in Miami harbor. The freighter had had the gall to unload goods in Havana.) The future congresswoman and the President's son were outraged that the Justice Department, citing an FBI report that said Bosch "repeatedly expressed and demonstrated a willingness to cause indiscriminate injury and death," had ruled that Bosch should be deported. After the election, Congresswoman Ros-Lehtinen and Jeb Bush continued their campaign to free Dr. Death (as the less-reverent in the Miami Cuban community called the bomb-throwing pediatrician). At one point Jeb Bush visited hunger strikers who were demanding the convicted terrorist's release and fed them encouraging words. On July 17, 1990, the Justice Department succumbed to the entreaties of Congresswoman Ros-Lehtinen and the political weight of the High Right in Miami, heeded the wishes of the Bush *pere* and *fils*, and reversed itself. Upon his release Dr. Bosch immediately called a news conference and unkindly called "ridiculous" the fourteen conditions he had agreed to as the terms of his freedom, including house arrest, electronic monitoring, and the renunciation of terrorism. "They purchased the chain but they don't have the monkey," he said.

If dads in their old age tell their sons war stories, George Bush had a good one to relate to Jeb about how he came to save the bacon of Jeb's later-life hero Orlando Bosch and his Cuban exile pals after they were linked to a 1976 Washington D.C. car bombing that killed former Chilean Ambassador Orlando Letelier. CIA Director Bush had to work overtime to keep the agency out of the storms when Letelier's murder on Embassy Row brought Death Squad politics to the nation's capital. Even by the agency's laissez-faire standards of anything-goes-against-Castro, Bosch was considered a loose canon. In fact that February the CIA had tipped off the Costa Rican police to detain Bosch when it heard he was plotting to kill Henry Kissinger because Kissinger wanted to improve relations with Cuba.

As later revealed in court proceedings in the Letelier case, the CIA under Bush knew within a week that the Letelier assassination was sponsored by DINA, Chile's secret police force. But the CIA artfully leaked a different story to the media. It first sought to divert suspicion from the rightist Chilean government of General Augusto Pinochet—an October 11, 1976, item in *Newsweek's* "Periscope" column read: "The CIA has concluded that the Chilean secret police were not involved in the death of Orlando Letelier..." Then it began a subtle campaign which implied that Letelier, a loyalist to Salvadore Allende (slain in the CIA-supported 1973 coup that brought Pinochet to power), might have been assassinated by the Chilean left in the misguided cause of creating a martyr. There were also attempts to paint Letelier as a Castro agent—for example, the December 20 Jack Anderson-Les Whitten column, titled "Letelier's Havana Connection," was based on papers allegedly found in Letelier's briefcase. But two co-workers of Letelier at the Institute for Policy Studies, a Washington, D.C., liberal think tank, believe that the CIA may have planted the documents in Letelier's briefcase. It wasn't until years later, after the trials of two Cuban exiles and one American charged with assassination, that it became apparent that Letelier was the DINA's victim, and that the CIA had unexplored relationships with the plotters. The possible nature of those relationships were discussed by Dinges and Landau: "Pinochet turned over to the United States Drug Enforcement Administration a planeload of cocaine dealers rounded up after the coup. Their drug dealing could be blamed on Allende's ousted government. Then Pinochet's right-hand man, Contreras, could set up his own men with DINA protection in the same cocaine factories and shipping points. The anti-Castro Cubans had a piece of the action. The enormous profits went to supplement DINA's clandestine budget. The Cubans' share went into individual pockets and to the anti-Castro cause."

And in *Cocaine Politics*, Peter Dale Scott and Jonathan Marshall describe the "dominance of the U.S. cocaine and marijuana trade by intelligence-trained Cuban exiles." (In a footnote to the Letelier-Moffitt murders, in 1990 the new civilian government of Chile agreed to pay compensation for the assassinations, which George Bush had tried to blame on the left.)

George Bush is the only former director of the CIA to become President of the United States and he has continued to keep the faith with the agency that spawned him. In the 1980s at the top of the CIA's wish list was the removal of the prohibition against assassination as a means of covert action. (Congress had insisted on the proscription after the mid-seventies revelations of the CIA-Mafia assassination plots against Castro.) But the agency's request for a green light was met with disfavor by congressional intelligence oversight committees during the Reagan-Bush years. However, upon his election President Bush tackled the touchy subject with renewed vigor.

On November 16, 1989, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that the Bush administration and congressional intelligence oversight panels had agreed that the CIA may participate in covert operations that might lead to violence against, or the death of, foreign leaders. Assassination would not be approved overtly, but it would no longer be illegal .

After the Bay of Pigs, John F. Kennedy asked the planners of the Secret War against Cuba to search for means other than direct military invasion to overthrow Castro. The plotters leaned heavily on the assassination option, but that was taken away from them. Now, in the fullness of time, George Bush has restored it.

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